

# Housing rebellion and the spectre of emperor Boris

A GREAT wave of property redevelopment is spreading across central London – reminiscent of the 1960s when miles of terraced slum housing was ripped up and replaced by the brave new world of the tower blocks.

At that time the conservation lobby was weak.

Now, judging by recent events in Camden, the public want their say – or else!

There are now three massive developments on the boil in Camden alone: Liddell Road, West Hampstead; Avenue Road, Swiss Cottage; and Royal Mail's Mount Pleasant site in

Clerkenwell – and each one has resulted in fierce public engagement. A massive rebellion among local people is likely to have nudged the council's planning committee which recently threw out the Avenue Road skyscraper proposal.

Unfortunately, the battle

lines are less sharply delineated in Liddell Road and Clerkenwell. While locals are clearly against a tower block in Liddell Road, the attitude of many Labour councillors, including their leader, appears to be ambivalent.

Angry locals accuse the

council, which is also the developer, of springing plans for a 14-storey tower on them at the last moment.

They say Labour knew of the scheme before the May election and kept it hidden until the polling booths had closed. Only a full and candid disclosure of the plans drawn up by the architects since the end of last year will settle the matter.

At least, a reasonable form of democracy prevails in Camden. But the future of the massive Mount Pleasant scheme is in the hands of a "dictator" – the populist Boris Johnson and his

autocratic powers. Like a Roman emperor he alone will give a thumbs-up or down tomorrow (Friday) at City Hall – however loud the public protest. He waved through a 42-storey City Road block a few years ago in 10 minutes, brushing aside objections from Islington Council.

## More cases like Paddy's?

IS it possible that the scandalous care given to 96-year-old Paddy

O'Halloran is the tip of the iceberg? (see page 1) Are there hundreds of elderly people in Camden being given similar care? A thorough investigation must be mounted by council officials.

And their first two questions should be: Are carers only on the minimum £6.31 hourly rate, or on zero-hour contracts?

Low pay doesn't attract committed qualified staff. Though the care company has been approved by the Care Quality Commission their inspectors have been found wanting at times.

## It's the old, old story

1. "SHIP me somewhere East of Suez; where the best is like the worst."

2. "At ease in the guardroom, bullied by the janker wallahs, the battle drum is only slumbering, your peaceful days its numbering."

## Letters to the Editor

Send your letters to: The Letters Editor, Camden New Journal, 40 Camden Road, London NW1 9DR or email to [letters@camdennewjournal.com](mailto:letters@camdennewjournal.com). The deadline for letters is midday Tuesday. The editor regrets that anonymous letters cannot be published, although names and addresses can be withheld.

Please include a full name, postal address and telephone number.

Letters may be edited for reasons of space.

## Need an extra bin off the

## Sunday with no services

□ A HIGH ridge of tarmac produced by just by bus stop D in Charing Cross Road, near Cambridge Circus has long been reported before via [FixMyStreet.com](http://FixMyStreet.com) but nothing has been done. Two Sundays ago this ridge caused an elderly gentleman on a theatre day trip from Manchester